

BRIDGNORTH
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.



ANNUAL REPORT

— OF THE —

Medical Officer of Health



FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st DECEMBER, 1949.

Bridgnorth Rural District Council

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Medical Officer of Health

For the year ended 31st December, 1949.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BRIDGNORTH
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year ended
31st December, 1949.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

L. E. DICKSON, M.D.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY.

Medical Officer of Health :

L. E. DICKSON, M.D. (Part time).

Sanitary Inspector and Food Inspector :

D. NEWMAN, Cert.S.I.B. (1/7/48—31/1/49).

G. S. N. INGHAM, Cert.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.
(from 1/2/49).

SECTION "A."

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area in acres, 101,040.

Registrar General's estimate of the Resident population at mid-1949,
Civilian: 13,050; Total: 16,560.

Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1949 according to the
Rate Book, 3,555.

Rateable Value, £57,799.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £241.

VITAL STATISTICS.

				Total	Males	Females
LIVE BIRTHS	....	....	....	204	110	94
Legitimate	....	....	....	190	104	86
Illegitimate	....	....	....	14	6	8
STILL BIRTHS	....	....	....	3	2	1
Legitimate	....	....	....	3	2	1
Illegitimate	....	....	....	—	—	—
DEATHS	....	....	....	133	71	62

BIRTH RATE per 1,000 of the estimated resident population — 15.6.

RATE per 1,000 total live and still births — — 14.4.

DEATH RATE per 1,000 of the estimated resident population — 11.9.

DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES: — — — Nil.

INFANT MORTALITY:

Deaths of Infants under one year of age:

				Total	Males	Females
Legitimate	....	....	....	6	4	2
Illegitimate	....	....	....	—	—	—

DEATH RATES OF INFANTS:

All infants per 1,000 live births, 29.4.

Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births, 31.5.

Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births, Nil.

DEATHS FROM:

Measles	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	—
Whooping Cough	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	2
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	—
Cancer	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	23
Pneumonia	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	6
Cardiovascular Diseases	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	47

COMPARATIVE RATES per 1,000 Civilian population:

					<u>National</u>	<u>R.D.C.</u>
Death Rates from Tuberculosis	....	....	....	....	0.45	0.45
Death Rate of Infants	....	....	....	....	32.0	29.4
Birth Rate all Infants	....	....	....	....	16.7	15.6
Death Rate	....	....	....	....	11.7	11.9

SECTION "B."

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS as in Section "A."

LABORATORY SERVICES are provided at the Royal Salop Infirmary.

NURSING IN THE HOME is under the control of the Local Health Authority, which is the Salop County Council.

AMBULANCE SERVICES. An ambulance, stationed at Bridgnorth, is in regular use for short distance journeys. Telephone No.: 2303. Long distance journeys are arranged by Headquarters. Telephone No.: Shrewsbury 2626.

The Women's Voluntary Service undertakes to convey suitable sitting-car cases to and from hospital.

HOSPITALS. There are no hospitals in the area. Cases of Infectious Disease are admitted to Wolverhampton Isolation Hospital when beds are available. For general diseases there are available, Bridgnorth and South Shropshire Infirmary, the Shrewsbury group of hospitals and the Wolverhampton group of hospitals. Regular sessions by consultants from the Wolverhampton Hospitals are held at Bridgnorth and South Shropshire Infirmary. For orthopaedic diseases needing hospital treatment, Park Hospital, Oswestry, and the Royal Hospital, Wolverhampton are available. Shirlett and Prees Heath Sanatoria are the county hospitals for Tuberculosis.

SECTION "C."

WATER SUPPLIES.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME.

- (1) **High Level Scheme.** Details of this portion of the Comprehensive Scheme have been prepared and submitted jointly by the Bridgnorth and Ludlow Rural District Councils to the Minister of Health. Matters have not proceeded far beyond this stage.

(a) ORETON & FARLOW. The water situation in this part of the district is entirely unsatisfactory, and at the invitation of the Ludlow R.D.C. the Council have agreed to prepare a joint scheme for the supply of these two areas, together with certain parishes in the Ludlow district. The Council's Consulting Engineer has been instructed accordingly and preliminary surveys have already been carried out.

- (2) **Low Level Scheme.** No progress has been made with the main part of this scheme during the past year as the information required by the Minister of Health has not yet been obtained, and the Minister has stated that he is not prepared to hold an inquiry until this information has been presented to him.

The Council have, however, received sanction to proceed with certain portions in advance of the main scheme. These are:—

- (a) NEEN SAVAGE. Work on the laying of mains, etc., was commenced in April, and at the time of writing this report the scheme is nearing completion. The system cannot be put into operation, however, owing to the delay in the delivery of special fittings.

It is expected that water will be available at a date early in the New Year.

- (b) **HIGHLEY & ALVELEY.** A deputation was sent to the Ministry of Health to plead the cause of these two villages, and after a very sympathetic hearing it was agreed to permit the Council to proceed with this section of the Low Level Water Scheme in spite of the fact that approval had not yet been given to the scheme as a whole. The necessary engineering details are now being prepared, and it is hoped that work will not be long delayed, as in my opinion, this is the most urgently needed section of the whole scheme.
- (3) **Parish of Claverley.** Water is supplied to this parish by the Wolverhampton Corporation's Water Undertaking. A number of small extensions have been considered during the year but no decisions have yet been taken. Thirty-four new consumers have been connected during the year, making a total of one hundred and eighty-nine premises having piped water supplies in this parish.
- (4) **Parish of Worfield.** During the year, the Council entered into an agreement with the Wolverhampton Corporation to provide a supply of water to Worfield, Ackleton and Roughton. Tenders have been invited, and it is expected that work will be commenced very shortly.
- (5) **Parish of Highley.** Great difficulty was experienced in maintaining a supply of water to this village. Owing to the prolonged spell of dry weather, the yield of the main springs at Londonderry Coppice fell to such a degree that the reservoir was completely emptied. Fortunately, it was possible to make up the greater part of the deficiency by piping water from a number of small spring sources approximately half a mile distant from the main source. The water from all these emergency sources was chlorinated, and every precaution was taken to ensure the purity of the supply.
- (6) **Parish of Stottesdon.** The new chlorinator which was installed at Stottesdon has not proved satisfactory in its operation, and accordingly a larger plant is to be purchased. This scheme is now being prepared, and it is hoped to put the new plant into operation during the next year.
- (7) **Parish of Alveley.** The work of relaying the village mains was commenced in July and is now nearing completion. A much needed improvement will have been made when the new pipelines are available for use by the ratepayers.

Statistics in respect of premises supplied with water from public piped supplies are detailed in the following table:—

			Premises	Estimated	Increase	Per-	
			Direct	By Stand- pipe only	Population Supplied	since Dec., 1948	centage of Parish
Alveley	....	....	31	96	369	1	44.0
Astley Abbots	....		12	—	38	—	8.1
Highley	....	....	348	211	2354	58	90.7
Kinlet:							
(a) Button Oak..			24	2	34	—	27.8
(b) Meaton Lane			13	—	—	3	
Stottesdon	....		40	—	386	—	15.0
Tasley	....	....	37	—	79	2	75.5
Morville	....		7	—	65	—	6.8
Claverley	....		189	—	582	34	47.0

Those parts of the district which are not served by public supplies obtain their water either from public or private wells, and in some instances private piped supplies.

SECTION "D."

Considerable progress in the building of new Council Houses has been made during the past year.

To date, ninety-two new houses have been completed and occupied, and a further eighteen are in course of construction. In addition, the Council own sites for approximately sixty more houses, and negotiations are in hand for the purchase of additional sites.

Very great difficulty has been experienced in providing new houses in many areas owing to the lack of an adequate water supply. As so little progress has been made in laying new pipe lines, the Council must soon give consideration to alternative methods of supplying water, otherwise it is possible to envisage a time arriving when building may have to cease owing to the lack of this essential service.

Details of post-war housing schemes are as follows:—

				Under Construction	Completed 1949	Total Completions at December, 1949
Alveley	....	....	....	—	—	16
Claverley	....	....	....	12	14	14
Hilton	....	....	....	—	6	6
Highley	....	....	....	—	50	50
Morville	....	....	....	6	—	6
				—	—	—
			Totals	18	70	92
				—	—	—

Due to the relaxation of the ban on private building the Council were able to issue a number of licences to private persons for the erection of new houses.

Details of private building are as follows:—

				Under Construction	Completed	Total Completions at December, 1949
Alveley	....	....	....	—	5	5
Aston Eyre	....	....	....	—	—	2
Burwarton	....	....	....	—	—	2
Claverley	....	....	....	2	—	1
Chetton	....	....	....	1	1	3
Eardington	....	....	....	—	1	2
Middleton Scriven	....	....	....	—	—	2
Romsley	....	....	....	—	1	3
Shipton	....	....	....	—	—	2
Stottesdon	....	....	....	—	—	2
Tasley	....	....	....	2	—	2
Worfield	....	....	....	3	—	—
				—	—	—
				8	8	26
				—	—	—

Of this total, twenty-one dwellings are occupied by workers engaged in agriculture and the remaining five are occupied by other private persons.

No applications for grants under The Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1946, have been received.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Very little has been done affecting sewers and sewage disposal plants during the past year. General maintenance has been carried on, and the various works have functioned as well as might be expected under the circumstances.

Considerable progress has been made in surveying the existing scheme in the village of Highley, and it is intended to carry out certain alterations at the Wrens Nest Site next year. Certain lengths of the sewers require relaying and enlarging, and the greater part of the necessary data has been obtained prior to the preparation of the details of the scheme.

A scheme for the construction of a system of sewers with the necessary disposal works for Claverley Village was considered by the Council, but this has been deferred for the time being on account of the extremely heavy cost likely to be involved.

The Council also have had the sanitary circumstances of the parish of Alveley under review, and it is expected that a decision will soon be reached as to whether or not a proper system of sewers and sewage disposal works should be constructed in the village without further delay.

SCAVENGING.

Since January, the Council have had in operation a scheme of refuse collection embracing almost the whole of their district, although no change has been made in the arrangements previously existing in the parishes of Highley and Alveley. A properly designed motor vehicle is used and the collection is carried out at fortnightly intervals.

Arrangements for disposing of the refuse are not entirely satisfactory, and more care is needed at the four refuse tips now in use. A form of controlled tipping is employed, but this is not as satisfactory as it should be owing to the lack of labour on the tips, and a great shortage of suitable material for covering the refuse.

The new system of refuse collection has been welcomed by the rate-payers, and the Council can feel, with every assurance, that real progress has been made.

COLLECTION OF NIGHT SOIL.

The odious task of night soil collecting is still undertaken, but again no other method of disposal is possible until a satisfactory piped water supply is generally available throughout the parish.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Water.

A grant-aided scheme is in force whereby samples of water collected from the area of the County of Salop may be submitted to the County Analyst at a reduced fee of 3/- per sample, for bacteriological examination.

Bacteriological samples from public supplies are examined free of charge at the Public Health Laboratories, Salop Royal Infirmary, Shrewsbury.

Sampling of Public Supplies was carried out regularly during the year and the following results were obtained from the seventeen samples taken:—

HIGHLEY	Quality highly satisfactory.
ALVELEY	Quality generally satisfactory.
STOTTESDON	Fluctuating in quality—to be chlorinated.
MORVILLE	Unsatisfactory—now chlorinated.

A Public Well in Danford Lane, Claverley, was found to be very unsatisfactory and has been replaced with a piped supply to a standpipe.

Public Wells at Broughton, Claverley, and at Tuckhill, Alveley, are unsatisfactory, and it is hoped to replace these by piped supplies also.

As a result of complaint, two cottages at Hilton, Worfield, have had piped supplies installed, and informal action has resulted in the provision of **satisfactory water supplies in other cases.**

Generally, the position as regards water supply in the district is very unsatisfactory. In many cases water has to be carried considerable distances; the majority of private wells are shallow and open to contamination.

DRAINAGE AND SANITATION.

With the exception of parts of Highley, new Housing Estates, and some premises with private sewage disposal plants, dry conservancy is the rule throughout the District, and again the arrival of a mains water supply will be the opportunity to do away with much of this practice, and secure conversions to the water carriage system. This is a particularly urgent matter in Highley.

Waste water drainage is, in far too many cases, simply a case of running the waste “down the garden” or into the nearest ditch, and the results of this practice over a period of years, are extremely unpleasant, apart from the danger to health. Where serious cases have been discovered, informal action has resulted in the provision of sinks, proper drainage and satisfactory disposal.

Where refuse is not collected by the Council, disposal on the whole is fairly satisfactory, although there are one or two old village dumps which require clearing. As regards the Council's refuse tips, it is strongly recommended that a full system of controlled tipping be instituted when possible.

HOUSING.

Although the Rural Housing Survey will not be completed and tabulated until September or October, 1950, approximate figures showing the condition of houses in the District can be given as follows:—

<u>Houses Surveyed</u>	<u>Category I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>
2512	533	969	722	288

Category I —Houses which are fit, or require only minor repairs.

Category II —Houses requiring repairs and/or alterations.

Category III—Houses requiring reconditioning.

Category IV—Houses which are considered suitable only for demolition.

It will be seen that only about 21% of the houses are fit, in all respects, by modern standards (Manual of Unfit Houses, 1919, Central Housing Advisory Committee and Housing Act, 1936), and about 11% are unfit. Those houses in Category III provide a field for useful work, as the reconditioning of these houses would, it is thought, not only save many from deterioration into Category IV, thereby becoming a loss, but also reduce the number of Council House applications where the need is almost entirely due to existing unsatisfactory conditions.

Of those in Category IV, one has been demolished and one has been made the subject of an undertaking to close. Further progress in this direction is, of course, restricted by the lack of alternative accommodation, it being still necessary to work on the principle that any roof is better than none.

Here it should be mentioned that the task of securing repairs to houses is made more difficult by the Rents Restriction Acts, as the rent payable on the majority of cottages means that even the bare necessities in the way of repair cost, on present pricing, perhaps several years rent.

Overcrowding statistics are not yet fully available, but it is estimated that Alveley, Claverley, Worfield and to some extent Highley have the majority of cases.

CAMPING SITES.

During the year the ten regular camping sites in the district were inspected and brought under licensing control. Conditions as to classes of dwellings, water supply, sanitation, etc., were imposed, and special attention given to the problem of unsightly double-deck and other 'bus bodies. In this connection one site has been completely cleared of such vehicles, and the remainder are either being removed or converted into bungalows. In conjunction with the Town and Country Planning Authority, layout plans are being prepared in each case by the Surveyor's Department to effect further improvements and preserve the amenities of the District.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

A total of 450 visits and inspections was made during the year to Houses, Factories, Food-premises of all kinds, Cowsheds, Dairies, and in connection with water supplies, drainage, camping sites and infectious disease.

Twenty-nine formal complaints were received, mainly in connection with housing repairs, and in all cases remedial action was taken. Three Statutory Notices were served, and one case was taken to Court of Summary Jurisdiction.

SECTION "E."

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

The standard of Food Premises in the district is, with some exceptions which are being dealt with, fairly good. Compliance with the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, and modern practice generally is rendered difficult in many cases by the absence of public services, i.e., mains water, electricity, main drainage, etc. Butchers have a particularly difficult problem in the disposal of wastes, and in drainage.

Food hygiene however is improving, and it is hoped that the adoption of the Food Bye-laws for Handling and Wrapping will effect further improvement. Food handling is largely a matter of education, and there seems to be a general public awakening in this respect.

MILK.

The Food and Drugs (Milk and Dairies) Act, 1944, and Milk Regulations came into force this year, leaving this Authority with responsibility only for the administration of those regulations dealing with the retail sale of milk, retail dairies and supplementary licences. Milk producers, and producer-retailers, are dealt with by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries through the County Agricultural Executive Committee. There are no pasteurisation plants in the district.

RESULTS OF MILK SAMPLES TAKEN IN 1949.

Grade	Tested				Passed	Failed
Tuberculin Tested				64	45	19
Accredited				21	15	6
Ungraded				17	15	2
Heat Treated....	..	..		—	—	—

ICE CREAM.

There are four registered manufacturers in the district and fifteen registered retailers, of which ten sell only pre-packed ice cream.

MEAT.

Slaughtering of animals, except for casualties and private pig killing, is carried out at the Wolverhampton Abattoir, from which centre meat is distributed to the Borough of Bridgnorth and the Rural District.

FOODSTUFFS CONDEMNED IN THE DISTRICT DURING 1949.

Potatoes, 2½-cwt.	Cabbage, ½-cwt.
Oatmeal, 352lbs.	Toffee, 7 bars.
Peaches, 208.	Herrings, 80 stone.
Kippers, 4lbs.	Haddock, 26lbs.
Liver, 15lbs.	

SECTION " F. "

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

The number of cases of infectious disease notified during the year was not above the average. There were fewer cases of measles than usual, and there were no cases of Diphtheria or Enteric Fever.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR.

Disease	Total Cases Notified		Cases Admitted to Hospital		Total Deaths
	Civ.	Non-Civ.	Civ.	Non-Civ.	
Scarlet Fever	20	22	9	22	—
Measles	100	2	1	2	—
Whooping Cough	57	—	—	—	2
Pneumonia	9	5	2	5	6
Erysipelas	3	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	—	—	—	—
Malaria (recurrent)	—	1	—	1	—
Infectious Hepatitis	—	7	—	7	—
Chicken-pox	—	2	—	2	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1949.

			New Cases				Deaths			
Age			Respiratory		Non-Resp.		Respiratory		Non-Resp.	
Periods			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Years	0	....	....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1	....	....	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
	5	....	....	—	—	1	1	—	—	2
	15	....	....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	25	....	....	2	1	—	—	2	—	—
	35	....	....	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
	45	....	....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
	55	....	....	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
	65 and upwards			—	1	—	—	—	—	—
			—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals			5	3	1	3	3	1	—	2
			—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The number of new cases in the year was about the average.

One case was not notified previous to death.

I am indebted to Mr. S. J. Yelland, Bridgnorth Rural District Surveyor, and Mr. G. S. N. Ingham, Bridgnorth Rural District Sanitary Inspector, for kindly compiling Sections "C," "D" and "E."

